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General Assembly
Sixtieth session

Official Records

67th plenary meeting
Tuesday, 20 December 2005, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Eliasson ..... (Sweden)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Gaspar Martins (Angola), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

Agenda item 3 (b)

Credentials of representatives to the sixtieth session of the General Assembly

Report of the Credentials Committee (A/60/595)

The Acting President: The Assembly has before it a report of the Credentials Committee, document A/60/595, containing a draft resolution recommended by the Committee in paragraph 12 of its report. The draft resolution reads as follows:

"The General Assembly,

"Having considered the report of the Credentials Committee and the recommendation contained therein,

"Approves the report of the Credentials Committee."

I now give the floor to the Chairman of the Credentials Committee, His Excellency Mr. Ricardo Alberto Arias of Panama.

Mr. Arias (Panama) (*spoke in Spanish*): I have the honour to inform the Assembly that, in addition to the Member States listed in paragraph 1 of the report of the Credentials Committee for the sixtieth regular session of the General Assembly, Angola, Georgia, Senegal and Tajikistan have submitted official credentials in due form, in accordance with Article 27 of the rules of the General Assembly.

Similarly, Afghanistan, Belize, Burkina Faso, the Comoros, Congo, Gabon, Iraq, the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Sierra Leone, in addition to the Member States listed in paragraph 2 of the report of the Credentials Committee, have communicated to the Secretary-General information on the appointment of their representatives by means of a facsimile communication from the head of State or Government or from the Ministry for Foreign Affairs or via letter or note verbale from the Permanent Mission.

The Acting President: We shall now proceed to consider the draft resolution recommended by the Credentials Committee in paragraph 12 of its report.

The Assembly will now take a decision on that draft resolution. The Credentials Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 60/181).

The Acting President: Before giving the floor to the speaker in explanation of position, may I remind delegations that such explanations are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Bagherpour Ardekani (Islamic Republic of Iran): My delegation joined the consensus on the resolution just adopted. However, I would like to

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express my delegation's reservations on those parts of the report contained in document A/60/595 which may be construed as recognition of the Israeli regime.

The Acting President: We have heard the only speaker in explanation of position.

The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of sub-item (b) of agenda item 3.

Agenda item 11

The role of diamonds in fuelling conflict

(a) Letter from the Russian Federation transmitting the report of the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme (A/60/589)

(b) Draft resolution (A/60/L.42)

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of the Russian Federation to introduce draft resolution A/60/L.42.

Mr. Denisov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): On behalf of the Russian Federation, which this year chaired the Kimberley Process, and also on behalf of a number of other sponsors, it is my honour to introduce draft resolution A/60/L.42, entitled "The role of diamonds in fuelling conflict: breaking the link between the illicit transaction of rough diamonds and armed conflict as a contribution to prevention and settlement of conflicts".

In keeping with its duties as Chair, the Russian Federation strove to strengthen the constructive basis of the Kimberley Process and to foster its continuing steady development in the light of new challenges and conditions.

To date, the Kimberley Process has made substantial progress towards achieving its basic goals, and its authority has been significantly enhanced. Thanks to the implementation of the international Kimberley Process Certification Scheme, serious obstacles have been established to thwart attempts to introduce conflict diamonds into the legal world trade and to use the income generated to finance terrorist activities.

One of the main achievements here is the system for peer review of the implementation of the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme. In 2005, 11 voluntary review visits were carried out. An expert mission went to Lebanon, and a special mission went to Liberia. Further important steps were taken to restrict the use of diamonds for laundering money generated by criminal activities and in the illegal cross-border transfer of large amounts of money. Significant progress was made in enhancing the reliability of statistics used within the Kimberley Process. The system of collecting statistical data became a real factor in monitoring the trade in rough diamonds.

The number of participants in the Kimberley Process is gradually being expanded. This year we were happy to welcome the accession to the process of a new participant, Indonesia, and we also welcome the reinstatement of Lebanon.

The draft resolution before us today reflects the significant progress and momentum achieved under the Kimberley Process during 2005. Its main elements are designed to further enhance the effectiveness of the implementation of the mandate of this Process.

Allow me, Sir, on behalf of the Government of the Russian Federation, to express our sincere gratitude to all participants in the Process for their spirit of cooperation that was shown during the various events held within the framework of the Kimberley Process in 2005 and to thank all delegations that showed interest in this draft resolution and that constructively participated in the consultations to agree on the text.

Since the publication of the draft resolution, the following 24 countries have joined the list of sponsors: Angola, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Greece, Guinea, Hungary, Indonesia, Ireland, Israel, Japan, Latvia, Liberia, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Poland, the Republic of Korea, the Republic of Moldova, Slovakia, Slovenia, Ukraine and the United States of America.

We hope that this draft resolution will be adopted by consensus.

Mr. Outlule (Botswana): I am delighted to welcome the report of the Chair of the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme contained in document A/60/589, submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 59/144 of 15 December 2004. We commend the Russian Federation for this excellent report, which is both comprehensive and informative. We are grateful to the Russian Federation for continuing to provide sound leadership to the Kimberley Process. The

successful conclusion of the Moscow plenary meeting of the Kimberley Process, held from 15 to 17 November 2005, was a clear demonstration of this exemplary leadership.

As we review developments since last year, it is appropriate that the international community celebrates the work of the Kimberley Process. It is good and appropriate to do so, because the Kimberley Process represents the unity and firm determination of the United Nations to act decisively to save lives by ending the scourge of war. It is a demonstration of the importance of multilateralism, and of the power of unity combined with purpose and action. It is clear that together we can end conflict and, above all, lay a firm foundation for the attainment of global peace and prosperity.

Diamonds are a valuable resource. This natural resource has made an enormous contribution to economic development and has brought happiness to many people. In Botswana, we have shown and continue to demonstrate how revenues from the good management of clean diamonds are essential to building infrastructure and to the education of our people and the good health of citizens. We are, therefore, fully committed to the twin objectives of breaking the link between the illicit transaction of rough diamonds and armed conflict and maintaining the contribution of legitimate diamonds to prosperity and development.

The report before us indicates that countries participating in the Kimberley Process have made significant and important progress towards the fulfilment of their objectives and obligations. In doing so they are contributing in no small measure, to the realization of the ultimate and noble objective of eliminating trade in illicit diamonds and protecting legitimate trade. The challenge that we all face is that of enhancing and sustaining the credibility of the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme.

There can be no doubt that the success of the Kimberley Process depends on full compliance with and strict adherence to its requirements and undertakings. We have come a long way, and collectively we have made an enormous investment in the Certification Scheme. We recognize and appreciate the progress made thus far as more countries participate in the work of the Kimberley Process. We therefore warmly welcome Indonesia's accession to the Process and the restoration of Lebanon's full participation. We look forward to working with both countries in strengthening the work of the Kimberley Process in the years ahead. The broadest possible participation is a welcome development that should have a salutary effect in terms of greater cooperation and wider partnership in the noble task of preventing conflict diamonds from entering the legitimate trade in rough diamonds.

We are happy that today the membership of the Kimberley Process consists of a wide spectrum of diamond producers, exporters and importers. The diversity of our membership reflects both our mutual interest and common objectives. We must therefore continue to work together to improve our reporting. Reliable statistical information is one of the cornerstones of the Kimberley Process. In this regard, reporting — timely reporting — is crucial to sustain the credibility of the Process.

I reiterate Botswana's readiness to chair the Kimberley Process during 2006. As one of the conveners of the Process and a diamond producer ourselves, we have substantial interest in the success of the Certification Scheme. We attach the utmost importance to the work of the Kimberley Process, and in this respect we serve on a number of structures aimed at continuously reviewing its operations to make it more effective and efficient in carrying out its mandate, as well as more responsive to new challenges.

Botswana has already received a peer review mission, in accordance with the requirements of the Kimberley Process, and we have participated in peer review missions to a number of countries. Our participation in the peer review missions provided us with valuable exchanges and insight on how the Kimberley Process can further improve our collective capacity to monitor compliance and respond in a timely way to new threats.

We are encouraged by the political will and readiness of the participating countries to work together to find solutions to common challenges. We deeply appreciate the strong support and continuing interest of the international community in the implementation of the Kimberley Process. This is how it should be, because it is for the common good. It is for this reason, and many others, that Botswana looks forward to co-piloting the Kimberley Process, with the European Community as Vice-Chair.

As draft resolution A/60/L.42 indicates, there are challenges that we must overcome. We will continue to count on the consistent and assured support of the international community in the months ahead. We are optimistic about the future, because we are convinced that in any situation where there are challenges, there are opportunities as well. In this regard, we are encouraged by the general atmosphere of good will and commitment to work together for mutual benefit.

I wish to conclude by stating that during our chairmanship, we will work closely with all the participating countries to ensure that together we can put our shoulders to the wheel. It is our expectation that our joint efforts and unity of purpose will enable us to put another facet on the Kimberley Process to ensure that good diamonds, which bring happiness to so many, can continue to sparkle and that those who purchase those beautiful products can wear them and enjoy them with equanimity.

Ms. Hulan (Canada): It is my honour to address the General Assembly today on behalf of Australia, New Zealand and Canada.

Mr. President, allow me to begin by congratulating the Russian Federation on its successful term as Chair of the Kimberley Process in 2005. The report and the draft resolution that we are adopting today are testament to the strong leadership of the Russian Chair over the past year.

Let me also take this opportunity to welcome Botswana as the incoming Chair of the Kimberley Process for 2006, and the European Community as Vice-Chair. We look forward to working with their delegations to advance the implementation and enforcement of the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme.

Canada, Australia and New Zealand remain fully supportive of the Kimberley Process, which advances human security by preventing conflict diamonds from penetrating the legitimate diamond market.

The Certification Scheme is working. Indeed, in its short lifetime it has already had a major impact on the global diamond trade. This is thanks in part to the comprehensive scope of the Scheme, which includes rough diamond producers and corporations representing 99.8 per cent of total global production. As the report before us notes, approximately 160 million carats of rough diamonds were produced in 2004, and more than 56,000 Kimberley Process Certificates were issued. The total value of rough diamond imports by the Kimberley Process reached almost $32 billion in 2004, up from $22 billion just one year earlier.

The Certification Scheme not only deprives criminals and non-State actors of access to easy capital, but it has also improved the revenue-generating capacity of Governments formerly affected by conflict diamonds, such as Angola, Sierra Leone and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, as increasing volumes of rough diamonds are exported through Government mechanisms. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo alone, rough diamond exports increased from $395 million in 2002 to $720 million in 2004.

The impact of this shift on the international community's conflict prevention and conflict resolution efforts has been direct and significant. With the signing of peace agreements, States such as Angola and Sierra Leone are now in the process of recovering from the armed conflicts fuelled by the illicit trade in conflict diamonds. The Certification Scheme also contributes to our efforts to construct sustainable peace in these countries and therefore serves as an important standing tool for conflict prevention and peacebuilding.

Canada, Australia and New Zealand are also pleased to note progress elsewhere, including the important political developments in Liberia, which saw the election of a democratic Government in November. While Liberia continues to be under Security Council sanctions as a result of its involvement in the conflict diamond trade — which in turn fuelled conflicts across West Africa in the 1990s — we note that it is currently in the process of implementing the Certification Scheme. We are committed to working with Liberia in these efforts.

We are also pleased to note the constructive spirit in which all Kimberley Process Governments, industries and civil society partners continue to ensure effective implementation and enforcement of Kimberley commitments. In that regard, Canada, Australia and New Zealand are particularly grateful to the European Community for leading the Kimberley Process peer review mechanism, which has made Kimberley the gold standard in cross-sectoral cooperation.

The Kimberley Process is now entering a critical phase as members embark on their first comprehensive

three-year review, as envisaged in the founding documents. At the plenary meeting in Moscow last month, participants adopted terms of reference for the review, which foresees the participation of Governments, industry, civil society, the United Nations and other interested parties. Canada, Australia and New Zealand welcome that approach and encourage all United Nations Member States and relevant United Nations institutions to cooperate with the Kimberley Process representatives as the review progresses.

While the Kimberley Process has made commendable progress, we continue to face the challenge of illicit diamond production in rebel-controlled areas such as northern Côte d'Ivoire. According to the recent Group of Experts report submitted to the Security Council (S/2005/699, enclosure), the rebel group Forces nouvelles is benefiting from the illicit production of diamonds, which generates millions of dollars for its activities. We are very concerned about that illegal activity and the potentially destabilizing effects those ill-gotten resources could have not only on Côte d'Ivoire but also on the entire region.

In order to stem the illicit flow of resources to insurgents, there is an urgent need for a detailed assessment of the volume of the Côte d'Ivoire diamond production. Equally important is the need to assess the volume of exports from Côte d'Ivoire and to identify where the illicit diamonds could be entering the legitimate market. We encourage the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire to assist the Kimberley Process in conducting that assessment and encourage regional partners to cooperate with the Kimberley Process to combat the flow of illicit diamonds originating in that country.

The Kimberley Process is making a major contribution to breaking the link between natural resources and armed conflict and stands as a testament to what can be achieved through the honest partnership of Governments, the United Nations, the private sector and civil society. It is, and remains, an essential tool for our collective efforts to prevent conflict, and we look forward to deepening its implementation and strengthening its enforcement in the months ahead.

The Acting President: In accordance with resolution 3208 (XXIX) of 11 October 1974, I now give the floor to the observer of the European Community.

Mrs. Juul-Jørgensen (European Community): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The acceding countries Bulgaria and Romania, the candidate countries Turkey and Croatia, the countries of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Serbia and Montenegro, the European Free Trade Association country Iceland, member of the European Economic Area, and Ukraine align themselves with this statement.

The annual General Assembly debate on the role of diamonds in fuelling conflict is an important opportunity for us to take stock of the progress made by the international community, through the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme, in combating the scourge of conflict diamonds. One year ago, when the General Assembly last considered the issue, the mood was overwhelmingly one of satisfaction at the remarkable achievements of the Kimberley Process, which has developed in a short time into a uniquely promising and increasingly effective tool for conflict prevention.

Now, one year on and almost three years into the existence of the Certification Scheme, the Kimberley Process has made further important strides in accordance with the objectives set out by the Assembly. Participants have made significant progress in the implementation of the Certification Scheme. The huge increase in official, certified exports from countries previously affected by conflict diamonds, such as Sierra Leone and the Democratic Republic of Congo, bears witness to the profound and positive impact the Kimberly Process has had on the international diamond trade. Virtually all the world's rough diamond trade is now conducted within the Kimberly Process Scheme. That means that the Kimberly Process is living up to the goal of inclusiveness set by the General Assembly in its past resolutions.

Moreover, there has been further solid progress in the effective monitoring of the Scheme's implementation. We are pleased to note that virtually all participants have now invited Kimberley Process review visits and that 25 such visits have already taken place, with the participation of Governments, the diamond industry and civil society. Moreover, the

recent Moscow plenary meeting made good progress in consolidating the statistical reporting system of the Certification Scheme, which is crucial to detecting any significant flows of illicit diamonds into the legitimate trade. And the Process has started to tackle the specific implementation challenges facing alluvial diamond producers. In that context, we were particularly pleased to see the United States volunteer to coordinate and take forward work within the Process on technical assistance.

At the same time, over the past year the Kimberley Process has had to deal with important challenges that should make us wary of any complacency and that underscore the need for continued strong support from the United Nations.

The ongoing illicit production of rough diamonds in the northern, rebel-held territories of Côte d'Ivoire is foremost among those challenges. Over the past year, the Kimberley Process has been monitoring the situation, in close cooperation with the United Nations Group of Experts on Côte d'Ivoire, which recently released its findings. It is probable that rough diamonds from northern Côte d'Ivoire are entering the legitimate diamond trade, in breach of the Kimberly Process and in breach of the ban on exports imposed by the Côte d'Ivoire authorities themselves.

The situation in Côte d'Ivoire presents a very significant challenge to all participants in the Kimberly Process. Thus, we were pleased to see the adoption at the Moscow plenary meeting of a resolution containing concrete measures to tackle the flow of illicit diamonds out of Côte d'Ivoire. Implementation of those measures is now, without doubt, a major priority for the Kimberley Process as a whole and concerns each and every one of its participants. Cooperation with the United Nations is a central element in the resolution, and we hope that the close working relationship between the Kimberly Process and relevant bodies of the United Nations on this issue will continue over the course of the coming year.

The European Union would like to express its sincere appreciation to the Russian Federation for its able stewardship of the Kimberley Process over the past year. Russia's professional, transparent and inclusive approach as Chair has enabled the Process to consolidate its successes and maintain the unity of purpose among the unique coalition of Governments, the international diamond industry and non-governmental organizations that has enabled the Process to move forward.

We look forward to welcoming Botswana to the chairmanship of the Kimberley Process for 2006. Following the recent election of the European Community to the vice-chairmanship of the Kimberly Process for 2006, we offer our full support to Botswana in dealing with the challenges that will confront the Process in 2006. Taking forward implementation of the measures agreed with regard to Côte d'Ivoire is certainly one of those challenges. Another important task will be completion of the three-year review of the Kimberly Process. The European Union has little doubt that the continuing need for the Kimberly Process as a conflict prevention tool will be an important theme in the review process, which will also present an opportunity for a comprehensive stock-taking of the Certification Scheme's functioning and effective.

Let me conclude by inviting the General Assembly to reaffirm its strong support for the Kimberley Process by endorsing the draft resolution presented today. The issue of conflict diamonds remains very much on the agenda, both as a potential long-term threat and, as we have seen this year, as an ingredient in crisis situations such as that of Côte d'Ivoire. As an effective multilateral response to that challenge, the Kimberly Process needs the continued, unwavering support of the United Nations.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/60/L.42, entitled "The role of diamonds in fuelling conflict: breaking the link between the illicit transaction of rough diamonds and armed conflict as a contribution to prevention and settlement of conflicts".

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/60/L.42?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 60/182).

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 11?

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 3.50 p.m.